

Assimilation

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Summary: In the cold void of space, a sinister presence makes itself known on a derelict UNSC ship.

Assimilation

He was running. Running through the dark, dank corridors that made up the intestines of the ship. Running away from that... that THING. The thing that had caused all of this... He stops at the intersection, panting, deliberating between the two paths the fork created. The marine sweats profusely, his head swinging between each dark hallway. Then, the sound of... a dripping liquid? His terror stricken face looks back for a second, and then he sprints down a path, following his primal instincts.

His feet slam against the metal floor, the sound resounding through the dead corridors of the ship, revealing his presence. He clutches his rifle with a death grip, it's his only hope, his only salvation. The solid metal floors eventually give way to metal grating, and after a while, the pounding of his feet stop. He has reached a dead end, the hall blocked by a crude barricade, pieces of plate armor, pipes, spare parts all fused together.

"Fuck," he whispers, his rifle at his side in one hand, the other touching the metal barricade. His breathing grows heavier, more desperate. "FUCK!" He gives in to his fear and rage, and begins to assault the barricade, punching it, kicking it, pummeling it. In his mind's eye, he sees it as the focus of all his humiliation, guilt, fear, and hate.

He collapses under the weight of the past couple of days, in all its horror and gore. He hadn't slept in what seemed like three days, one could not tell with the power out. The thing was clever, it had first targeted the figure of authority, the one no one would question, then cut the power and targeted the people in the largest groups, causing so much confusion and distrust that the crew ceased to be a cohesive force.

He begins to shudder, he feels his fear over take him, the weight of his situation, tears begin to form. His mind begins to drift to past times to Allie. To Charles. To Herman's Bakery. To Julia...

"Hiss-click, click-click, hiss-click." Everything stops, his mind back to its former state, and he stares back into the abyss. He had been hearing it for the last couple of hours, paranoia taking over the last vestiges of his sanity. He scans the area in vain, searching for the unknown enemy. He licks his lips, trying to get a grasp on reality. He glances at his ammo counter, 14.

He begins to count _One, two, three, four, five..._all the way up to fourteen, then he begins again, his only tether to reality. He unconsciously backs up into the barricade, and- there it is again! Is it really there? Is it insanity? Is it stalking him, toying with him, trying to break him?

"Hiss-click, click-click, hiss-click." _Panic floods his brain, he is alone. "COME OUT YOU FUCKER! I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE! COME OUT DAMN YOU!" He stares into the darkness, then, from the vents, comes the creature. He stares at it in silent horror, as it slips through the bars, slowly, steadily. Individual features slowly become visible, its torso, its arms, the head.

The facial features slowly began take form, but there was something familiar about the way the cheekbones were forming... something almost... pleasant?

"Julia?" The marine is lost in time, his mind taking him back to pleasanter times, although no time in his life was really pleasant, as he was an orphan street rat, but, there was Julia, his delight. His little sister, whom he raised, fought for, protected, enlisted with, swore to take care of... and then... abandoned...

He could still see the first encounter, the thing had assimilated? one of their own, it disguised itself as one of them, it changed its form, like a liquid, his sister had been one of its first victims, the bastard had first taken form of- _Oh shit, what am I doing?_

He had been reaching forward, hoping to cup her impish face in his hand once again, wipe her tears away, tell her everything was going to be alright. But this... this monstrosity, was the cause of all his loss, all his guilt, all his shame.

He lets out a roar, a roar of a tortured beast, long imprisoned and tortured. He empties the remainder of the clip into the beast. Fire illuminates the area for a couple of seconds, showing the miniscule amount of damage that was dealt. The bullets were being absorbed into its liquidy mass, then, the gun stopped unleashing its deadly cargo.

The marine didn't need to look, he'd been trained so well so that the feel of the gun told him it was empty, _But I've never been trained for something like this_. He snarls and draws his sidearm, but he never fires a shot. The creature dropped to the floor and leaped at him with its scythe-like arms, impaling his arms into the barricade.

"Why won't you just fucking DIE?!" He screams in his agony and begins to fight his torturer. He fights like a school girl, kicking, biting, trying desperately to dislodge himself from its grip. The creature doesn't care, doesn't react, but the creature held his head in place. "_The Swarm cannot die, it is eternal, WE are eternal."_

The creatures facial features then began to bubble, it became a mix of Julia's, Anderson's, Admiral Fisher's... and... his? The marine stared into a mirror image of his own face for a split second, then it reverted back into its true form, with its beady, black eyes and spider- like mandibles. "_Bear witness to the power of the Swarm, and testify to your gods in the afterlife pathetic human,_" it hissed, every syllable rattling the mandibles and sending spit into his face. "_The Swarm feeds on essence to evolve, to adapt, to survive, so it shall be with me. The assimilation must be completed." _The marine stared in horror at the gaping abyss it called a mouth and screamed.

The scream was cut short, echoing throughout the bowels of the dead ship, drifting through the cold void of space.

"Liberty, come in, come in Liberty," the coms blare. "Sir, the ship's com flags are still up but no one is answering. Is the mission still a go or-Liberty, this is the Purifier we have a damaged slipspace drive. We must come on board and salvage yours, if no one responds to this within the hour, we have orders to send a Pelican and salvage yours. Purifier over and out."

The creature let out a satisfied hiss, " _More essence needed... Assimilation not yet completed..."_

**Thanks for reading my fanfic, I'm not an expert in Halo lore, so if I do continue posting Halo fanfics, it would be much appreciated if you could correct me. Also, if you don't know what the Creature is, it is an actual creature from a game. A cookie to the first person you guesses correctly. This is kind of a crossover, but, I felt that it was mostly a Halo fanfic. Again, thank you for reading, and reviews are much appreciated. **

End
file.